

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KS, JA

SUBJECT: ROK-JAPAN IMPASSE: BLUE HOUSE ATMOSPHERE

1. BLUE HOUSE CHIEF PRESS SECRETARY KIM SONG SHIN ASKED TO MEET PRIVATELY WITH POL COUNS EVENING SEPT 6. MAIN PURPOSE KIM APPROACH APPEARED TO BE INTENSE BLUE HOUSE INTEREST IN POSSIBILITY OF VISIT TO KOREA BY PRESIDENT FORD (POL COUNS GAVE REPLY AUTHORIZED STATE 193338).

2. BULK OF HOUR LONG CONVERSATION HOWEVER DEALT WITH CURRENT STATE OF ROK-JAPANESE RELATIONS. WHILE NOT DIRECTLY ACKNOWLEDGING GOVERNMENT INSPIRATION, KIM WAS EXPLICIT IN LINKING SEPT 6 DEMONSTRATIONS AND RANSACKING OF JAPANESE EMBASSY TO FONMIN KIMURA STATEMENT OF PREVIOUS DAY. KIM SAID THAT THE SERIES OF STATEMENTS COMING FROM TOKYO, MAINLY FROM KIMURA, HAVE GOTTEN TO POINT WHERE PRESIDENT AND OTHER HIGH LEVEL OFFICIALS BELIEVE THAT THEY MAY BE DESIGNED TO BE "PROVOCATIONS." KIM STRESSED PRESIDENT AND OTHER MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT WANT TO RESOLVE IMPASSE IN "RESTRAINED, REASONABLE" FASHION. HOWEVER GOVERNMENT LEADERS BELIEVE THEY ARE BEING "PRESSURED" INTO A CORNER BY JAPANESE ATTITUDE AND STATEMENTS.

3. KIM SAID THAT THERE IS INTENSE DEBATE GOING ON WITHIN GOVERNMENT ABOUT FUTURE DIRECTION OF ROK-JAPAN
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POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP. KIM SAID THAT

GOVERNMENT HAD ALWAYS HAD CONTENDING INTEREST GROUPS, ONE FAVORING CLOSE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL TIES WITH THE JAPANESE AND ANOTHER (IN WHICH HE PUT HIMSELF) STRESSING THAT RELATIONSHIP WITH U.S. WAS MOST IMPORTANT. IN PAST WEEK THESE DEFENDERS OF CLOSER JAPANESE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC TIES HAVE BEEN PUT COMPLETELY ON THE DEFENSIVE. POL COUNS STRESSED TO KIM IMPORTANCE TO ROKG OF JAPANESE TIES. HE POINTED OUT THAT ROKG SHOULD BE UNDER NO ILLUSIONS THAT US OR OTHER NATIONS COULD OR WOULD BE ABLE TO FILL ECONOMIC VOID LEFT BY BREAK IN RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

4. KIM SAID THAT PRESIDENT PARK HIMSELF HAS NOT YET DECLARED HOW FAR HE IS PREPARED TO GO IN PRESENT CRISIS WITH JAPAN. KIM SAID IT IS HIS OWN PERSONAL ASSESSMENT THAT, IF JAPANESE REPLY TO PRESIDENT PARK'S DEMANDS IS "LUKEWARM AND UNACCEPTABLE" PRESIDENT WILL OPT FOR THE "WORST CASE." KIM WAS NOT SPECIFIC AS TO WHAT THE "WORST CASE" WOULD BE BUT INDICATED IT CERTAINLY WOULD INVOLVE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO NATIONS.

5. IN DISCUSSION PRESIDENT PARK'S PERSONAL MOOD, KIM SAID THE PRESIDENT WAS DEEPLY RESENTFUL AND UPSET. THE PRESIDENT BELIEVES THAT, AT GREAT POLITICAL RISK HE HAD ORIGINALLY MOVED TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH JAPAN AND HAD BORNE THE INSULTING PROPAGANDA AND ATTACKS MADE ON HIM BECAUSE OF HIS BACKGROUND AS A JAPANESE ARMY OFFICER EMANATING FROM DOMESTIC CRITICS, JAPANESE LEFTISTS, AND NORTH KOREANS. HOWEVER IN SITUATION IN WHICH HIS WIFE HAD BEEN KILLED AND HIS OWN SAFETY THREATENED, PRESIDENT PARK HAD FOUND JAPANESE COMPLETELY CALLOUS AND INSENSITIVE.

5. KIM SAID THAT ROKG HAD NO TIMETABLE FOR ACTION BUT IT CLEAR THAT IF REPLY NOT RECEIVED FROM TANAKA BY SEPT 12 DATE OF HIS SCHEDULED DEPARTURE OVERSEAS, THIS WOULD BE SUCH A SLIGHT THAT ROKG COULD NOT IGNORE IT AND PRESIDENT WOULD REACT.

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6. COMMENT: IN PAST DAY WE HAVE BEEN PRESSED FROM EVERY QUARTER OF GOVERNMENT ON SERIOUSNESS OF SITUATION AND NEED FOR FAVORABLE JAPANESE RESPONSE. PART OF THIS IS UNDOUBTEDLY DESIGNED TO SECURE OUR SUPPORT. AT SAME TIME WE CANNOT IGNORE THE WARNING SIGNALS WE ARE RECEIVING.

7. THERE IS A BELATED RECOGNITION IN GOVERNMENT
THAT YESTERDAY'S DEMONSTRATIONS AT JAPANESE EMBASSY
WENT TOO FAR AND INTRODUCED A NEW, HIGHLY CHARGED
EMOTIONAL ELEMENT IN THE SITUATION. AT SAME TIME
ROKG SENIOR OFFICIALS ARE INCREASINGLY PESSIMISTIC
ABOUT COURSE OF EVENTS. IN ABSENCE SOME JAPANESE
GESTURE, THEY BELIEVE THAT SUCH ACTION AS WITHDRAWAL
OF AMBASSADORS IS ONLY THE MINIMUM ACTION ROKG CAN TAKE,
WITH THE VERY REAL POSSIBILITY OF MORE SEVERE
RETALIATORY ACTIONS. (SEPTTEL REPORTS FONMIN'S
CONVERSATION WITH CHARGE IN WHICH FONMIN AGAIN STRESSED
NEED FOR JAPANESE GESTURE BEFORE TANAKA'S DEPARTURE.)
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